

Supporting Youth Sports in Fauquier County

Fauquier Youth Sports Coordination Council

Work session with the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors

April 19, 2004

I. Who is the Fauquier Youth Sports Coordination Council?

- In 1999, leaders of the major youth sports organizations joined together to address the critical field shortage faced in the county, and the Fauquier Youth Sports Coordination Council was formed.
- Members represent baseball, soccer, football & softball youth sports organizations.
 - Fauquier County Soccer Club
 - Fauquier Babe Ruth Baseball
 - Fauquier Youth Football
 - Fauquier Girls Softball Association
- Seeing the need for fields outpace the availability, the Council members wanted to:
 - ensure enough fields were available for all the interested participants,
 - have greater control of the fields they rely on, and
 - centralize groups of fields to facilitate families with multiple participants.They were willing to invest energy and money (resources the County would normally have to supply) to achieve these goals.
- These volunteer organizations each work to provide the youth of Fauquier County with a positive opportunity to build sports skills and life skills in an enjoyable environment. The four members served 5,485 participants in the most recent twelve-month period.
- Council participation has improved communication and cooperation among the member groups.

II. Community Need in 1999

- Working with P&R, in 1999 the Council analyzed the availability of existing fields, plans for future fields, recent standards for # fields needed by sport based on population, and proposed a plan to address the gap.
- The analysis showed that, with only 57 fields built and school site plans for 12 more, the County's need for 99 fields would not be met.

Proposed a public-private partnership to build 3 sports complexes in the County.

- The county would provide land & infrastructure; the sports leagues would develop, maintain, and schedule the fields.
- The Supervisors agreed it was a great idea, and appropriated \$3.5 million to make it happen.

III. Community Need Now

A. What's driving the need?

Our recent analysis found that population growth and recreation trends have made the gap between field need and field inventory even larger.

- Fauquier population growing faster than projected. (Note: youth participation has grown faster than county population.)
- Additional sports have gained popularity and now require fields (i.e., lacrosse).

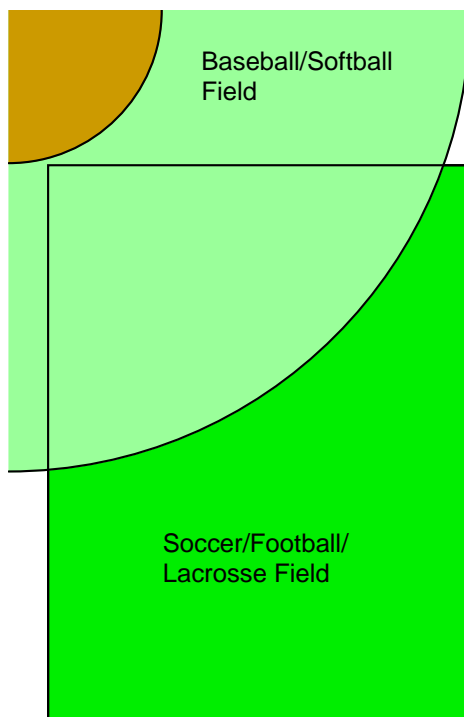
Field Needs in Fauquier County

		<u>1999 Projections</u>			<u>Current Projections</u>	
Year		1997	2007	2014	2007	2014
Population		53,000	64,000	72,000	68,354	84,067
Sport	Standard					
Baseball	1:2,000	27	32	36	34	42
Softball	1:4,000	13	16	18	17	21
Football	1:8,000	7	8	9	9	11
Soccer	1:2,000	27	32	36	34	42
Lacrosse	1:17,000	not considered			4	5
Total		73	88	99	98	121

*Population figures based on 3% growth and 2000 census data = 55,578.

- Sports activities are now bleeding over into additional seasons, so scheduling of overlay fields has become problematic (1/3 of the fields in the county are overlays). For example, Mary Walter lists 4 fields, but only 2 can be used at one time. PB Smith lists 3 fields, but only 2 can be used at one time.

Baseball/Softball Field with Soccer/Football Field Overlay



When baseball & softball were played primarily in the spring, and soccer and football were played primarily in the fall, this arrangement maximized space effectively.

Now, however, baseball, softball, and soccer all play in both spring and fall seasons, creating a situation where they all want the same "field."

This arrangement was counted as 2 fields in the 1999 study. Today, we recognize that this functions as only one distinct field.

- Result: Current available fields (including private fields): 46

B. Original Plan

- Field inventory = 57, need 99 by 2014, gap = 42.
- School build-out opportunities were found to be too expensive at the time.
- Solution: Build 42 fields at 3 Complexes.

C. Current Situation

- Field inventory = 46, need 121 by 2014, gap = 75.
- Northern Complex: Planning 10
- Central Complex: Planning 11
- Southern Complex: Looking for land for 20 fields
- Warrenton Town Center: Planning 6
- Auburn Middle School: Planning 4
- When these 5 projects are complete, the total field inventory will = 97.
- Gap we will face in 10 years with full build out of plans listed above: 24 fields.

D. Opportunities at current sites: 7 distinct fields

- Thompson requires water/sewer service (would yield 1 field)
- PB Smith requires extensive grading (1 additional field possible)
- Vint Hill (1 additional field)
- Ritchie (1 additional field)
- Southeastern (1 additional field)
- Brumfield (2 additional field)
- NOTE: School sites that leverage maximum field development may require additional parking development, thus infrastructure investment could be required.
- Some recent field development projects at county schools couldn't be brought into use on a timely basis. To avoid future delays or re-work, we recommend employing P&R to provide expertise to ensure fields are developed as they should be, and partnering with the Council to leverage their resources.
- Development of fields at schools helps the overall count, but does not achieve the centralization to allow families to have multiple participants without transportation conflicts. (Currently, it's not unusual for a child to miss or be late for practices or games because siblings are on a team at a different site.)
- School site usage needs to be coordinated with school functions. School meetings and special events take precedence over youth sports activities. Practices and games must be cancelled when there is a conflict.
- School expansion requirements result in the loss of fields and sports facilities. At Coleman, a tee ball field will be lost to trailers this fall. At Cedar Lee, Parks & Rec invested \$30,000 in tennis courts two years ago. A building addition may occupy that space soon.

E. Summary Field Inventory in 2014 if all current plans are completed

Current Inventory	46
Auburn Middle School	4
Warrenton Town Center	6
Northern Complex	10
Central Complex	11
Southern Complex	20
<u>School Site Opportunities</u>	<u>7</u>
Total when all projects are complete	104
<u>Projected need in 2014</u>	<u>121</u>
Gap	17

F. Remaining shortfall in 2014: 17 fields

Given this situation, we recommend that the County:

- (1) Move aggressively to deliver their portion of the work to complete the three complexes.
- (2) Plan for field build outs at school sites, considering role of Parks & Rec and Fauquier Youth Sports Coordination Council in site development and maintenance.
- (3) Work with the Council and P&R to initiate plans for a 4th Sports Complex.
- (4) Incorporate long-term planning for future fields in all applicable county plans: school development, parks, residential development, etc.

IV. Current Status of the Projects and Council

A. Overall

- Land secured for Northern & Central Parks
- Northern donation drastically changed that project
- Central has been moving along, but slower than any of us would like. Very close to breaking ground now.
- Meanwhile, many of the children and parents who heard the promise 5 years ago have become cynical. Some have graduated from the programs without a bit of earth being turned.
- Participation in youth sports had grown dramatically.
 - Player counts in the member clubs has swelled from 4,367 in 1999 to 5,485 in 2003.
 - Additional organizations drawing on the same fields served approximately 400 more children.
 - Result: 35% more children are playing on the same fields as 5 years ago.

B. Council Operations

- Significant progress with council operations:
 - Revised by-laws and policies in January, incorporating lessons we've learned so far
 - Cementing each member group's commitment to the projects
 - Working together and leveraging one another for fundraising
 - Creating safeguards for member groups facing difficulty in meeting project commitments
 - Draft policy for new groups that want to join
 - Developing policy for field use by non-member groups
- Each member group is learning from the others and promoting the council's goals and activities within our respective organizations
- We're working together to make sure we ALL get there

C. Ability to meet our commitments

- Central: sitework donor
- Cash on hand: approximately \$300,000 across the 4 members, another \$100,000 expected to be generated this year
- Three grant applications submitted totalling \$254,000
- Corporate donors: \$125,000 committed. Additional \$500,000 will be pursued once site plans are complete
- Additional in-kind donors
- Remember, if the County were paying for all the field development, at the Central Complex they would face:
 - 3 football fields @ \$70,000 each
 - 3 soccer fields @ \$70,000 each
 - 4 60' baseball/softball diamonds at \$125,000 each
 - 1 90' baseball/softball diamond at \$175,000
 - Total field development cost (based on national averages): \$1,095,000
 - Instead, the Council is raising money, applying for grants, and soliciting donors to cover these costs
- Proven performance in field maintenance: Members already do the following:
 - Mow, fertilize, seed, private fields
 - Mow county fields when needed
 - Maintain infields—supplying infield mix, spreading mix, dragging the fields daily, edging as needed
 - Roll & aerate fields
 - Topdress/fill holes & seed—repairing damage or overuse
 - Have cleared trees, added topsoil, seeded initial fields
 - Will grade & seed a hump left by utility work, add emergency vehicle access

- Initial season set-up, ongoing lining, setting up goals/bases

D. North

Council recognizes the donor is taking the lead on the plan.

- We are eager to get the complex built.
- We are working with appropriate County staff to monitor & support the situation as it evolves.
- We are counting on maintaining the fields.
- While we realize there are challenges, our members look to us to make sure the park meets their needs. We look to you to be our advocates; every time features are removed that make the end product less productive, the project strays further from the original commitment made to the children.
- Remember why we did this in the first place. Please be an advocate for the youth sports players in our county.
- We stand ready to help the Board get the park complete and operational.

E. Central

- Final plan expected around the April 19 meeting.
- P&R Board, BOS approval needed.
- Community Development approval needed—need to expedite so we can open fields next spring.
- Corporate donor showing high interest in providing field development work at this site.
- Depending on contributions, Council hopes to open all fields for use next year.
- Let's get this project out for bid and get these fields built!

F. South

- The site selection process was stalled for several months by the Pelham Village proffer.
- Site selection now reported to be moving again, but without measurable success.
- As time goes by, possible sites are consumed or become even more expensive to acquire.
- Look for multiple sites to ensure prompt land acquisition when some fall through.
- Make the southern complex a priority by:
 - Expediting land acquisition,
 - Providing resources to permit Parks and Recreation to plan the southern on an accelerated schedule once land is acquired, and
 - Avoiding complex deals that will slow the process down.

V. How Can the Board Support the Council?

- Fully support accelerated development of the 3 complexes.
- Avoid complexities which delay progress and jeopardize success—growth in participation is bringing the field shortage to crisis level.
- Mobilize school site plan revisions, move field build outs at schools into the planning process. Empower the Council and P&R to take a role in the development, maintenance, and scheduling of these additional fields at school sites.
- Once we get these moving effectively, we'd like to come back and talk about a 4th complex. Keep it in the back of your mind.
- Make sports field planning part of the overall planning/rezoning efforts.
- Keep your customer in mind: We're doing this for the children of Fauquier County.